

Uganda poor at trade policy, says report

BY JOSEPH OLANYO

KAMPALA, UGANDA - Uganda fared badly in inclusive trade policy making compared to her East and central African counterparts of Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia, a report has shown.

According to the Inclusiveness of Trade Policy Making (ITPM) report released last week in Kampala, Uganda was second last in ratings.

ITPM index is a measure of inclusivity of trade policy making processes by respective government ministries and stakeholders. It rates a country's ability to integrate trade policies into its development plans through consultative mechanisms.

Despite the presence of an Inter Institutional Trade Committee (IITC), a consultative forum on trade policy and implementation under Ministry of Tourism trade and Industry (MTTI), the consultative mechanism is



FLOWER TRADE: Flowers are one of Uganda's exports. Poor trade policies affect sectors like horticulture. File Photo

reportedly poor.

Presenting the research findings for Uganda last week, the Director Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) Geneva Resource Centre, Mr Atul Kaushik, said Uganda has challenges, which need more attention of both the Government and other stakeholders.

"Uganda has no problem with getting money. Donors are willing to come up, but the main challenge is less up take by the operating

levels of government machinery to implement the policies," Atul said.

The report found out that lack of capacity to fully implement necessary reforms, lack of regular information flow on trade issues, and lack of involvement and participation was a challenge among other relevant government ministries and agencies.

It further stated that occasional tensions with Government, limited outreach to rural areas and

the grassroots were challenges to CSOs.

"Limited trust between government and civil society since civil society does not agree with many aspects of the government's neo-liberal approach," the report said.

According to the report, Kenya was ranked top among the five countries in inclusiveness of trade policy making followed by Zambia and Malawi.

For Uganda to score highly in trade policy inclusiveness, the report recommends investment in knowledge and expertise building, promotion of a culture of dialogue and inclusiveness by all stakeholders. It also recommends regular information flow on trade issues and better coordination among relevant government ministries and agencies.

"Inclusiveness will generate national ownership, which is the best guarantee for effective implementation of trade policy as part of overall development policy," the report said.

Tz needs to improve quality to compete

BY ELIAS WAMBURA

DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA - Rapid globalisation and free market economies requires countries like Tanzania to redouble efforts in ensuring quality production Tanzania Prime Minister Pinda has said.

This is among the best ways to beat stiff competition and, at the end of the day, sell more - especially at the export markets.

He was on Thursday launching a programme to help Tanzania develop its capability and capacity to meet competition.

Known as the Cluster Competitiveness Programme (CCP), the three-year project is jointly funded by the World Bank Group and United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID).

CCP utilizes the cluster methodology to strengthen selected industry firms and contribute to Tanzania's economic development," according to the programme's team leader, Hayley Alexander.

He told East African Business Week that the

general idea is to support overall economic development in Tanzania, beginning with tourism, food processing and horticulture.

"Each will be supported through geographical concentrations of co-located firms - otherwise known as 'clusters'... CCP will be able to support those most likely to work together, and benefit from the cooperation," said Alexander.

Noting that the global competition at the market place is bound to intensify, Alexander said it is imperative that countries continue to improve their regulatory environments while firms in their respective private sector strive to offer higher-value products to meet international standards.

Pinda said to be competitive, products need to impress customers. He said, "They need to be durable and safe enough to meet the expectations of prospective and potential customers.

Their prices should be affordable - going hand in hand with the quality of the products," Pinda added.